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Legislation would provide for responsible regulation of wine shipments

LANSING – Legislation introduced Wednesday in the Michigan Senate and House would allow Michigan consumers to receive direct shipments of wine while protecting minors and addressing tax concerns, announced Sen. Michelle McManus and Rep. Howard Walker, sponsors of the package.

“While concerns about protecting our young people are legitimate, there is a way for us to responsibly and fairly regulate direct shipments of wine to consumers without taking such drastic measures as banning all shipments,” said McManus, R-Lake Leelanau. “Consumers in many states are permitted to receive direct shipments of wine, and these states have not experienced increased underage drinking.”

Senate Bills 625 through 628 and House Bills 4987 through 4990 would maintain Michigan consumers’ access to direct-shipped wine while providing a mechanism for the collection of sales taxes and keeping wine out of the hands of minors. It also would establish penalties for violators of the proposed legislation.

“The goal of this package is to enact responsible and workable regulations that will be fair to both wineries and consumers,” said Rep. Howard C. Walker, R-Traverse City. “The bills address concerns raised about sales taxes and underage drinking while making it possible for consumers to continue to receive wine shipped directly to their homes.”

The Supreme Court recently struck down laws in Michigan and New York that allowed in-state wineries to ship wine to consumers while banning shipments from outside the state. Michigan must now update its laws to comply with the decision.

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